

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /018 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:BDSHANKS
APPROVED BY PA/M:CWFREEMAN,JR.
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DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PA, PA/PRS, S/S

-----020496 142135Z /61

P 142102Z APR 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES BY JAMES RESTON,
FRIDAY, APRIL 14 HEADED "IS ANYBODY IN CHARGE?"

2. WASHINGTON, APRIL 13--ON THE NIGHT BEFORE SECRETARY
OF STATE VANCE STARTED HIS LONG JOURNEY TO SOUTHERN
AFRICA AND THE SOVIET UNION THIS WEEK, HE DINED PRI-
VATELY WITH SENATORS RIBICOFF OF CONNECTICUT, KENNEDY
OF MASSACHUSETTS AND CHURCH OF IDAHO. THEY TALKED
ABOUT PANAMA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARMS CONTROL WHILE HE
WAS AWAY.

3. MR. VANCE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN HIS
ABSENCE, AND THE SENATORS COULDN'T TELL HIM. FOR THE
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CONGRESS IS PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AND UN-
PREDICTABLE ROLE IN THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AND DEFENSE
POLICY AND NOBODY'S IN CHARGE.

4. ALMOST ANY DETERMINED MINORITY IN THE HOUSE OR
SENATE CAN NOW BLOCK PRESIDENT CARTER'S ENERGY POLICY,
OR ARMS CONTROL POLICY. SO HOW COULD MR. VANCE BE SURE

WHAT TO NEGOTIATE WHEN HE WAS NOT EVEN SURE OF SUPPORT FROM HIS OWN CONGRESS?

5. ON THE DAY MR. VANCE LEFT, THE ADMINISTRATION'S PANAMA TREATIES--AND INDIRECTLY ITS RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA--WERE IN JEOPARDY BECAUSE OF A FRESHMAN SENATOR FROM ARIZONA, DENNIS DECONCINI, HAD INTRODUCED AN AMENDMENT THAT WOULD AUTHORIZE THE UNITED STATES TO INTERVENE WITH FORCE ANYTIME IN THE NEXT CENTURY IF THE CANAL WERE CLOSED FOR ANY REASON. THE SENATE APPROVED, BUT PANAMA WAS OUTRAGED.

6. LIKEWISE, THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF RESTORING ARMS SHIPMENTS TO TURKEY--AND SOME KIND OF COHERENCE TO ITS EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN POLICY--HAS BEEN BLOCKED PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE OPPOSITION OF REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BRADEMAS OF INDIANA, THE DEMOCRATIC WHIP IN THE HOUSE, WHO HAS STRONG EMOTIONAL TIES TO GREECE, AND BITTERLY RESENTS TURKEY'S USE OF U.S. WEAPONS TO OVERWHELM THE GREEKS ON CYPRUS.

7. THE FOUNDING FATHERS FELT THAT THE SHARP DIVISION OF EQUAL POWERS BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. AND THE EXCESSIVE UNCLASSIFIED

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AND CORRUPTING USE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER IN VIETNAM AND WATERGATE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS VIEW AND STARTLED THE CONGRESS INTO DEMANDING CLOSER SUPERVISION AND EVEN CONTROL OVER THE PRESIDENT AND HIS POLICIES OVERSEAS.

8. BUT THE QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER THE UNDERSTANDABLE REACTION TO THE EXCESSES OF VIETNAM AND WATERGATE HAS GONE TOO FAR, AND IS BEGINNING TO CUT DOWN THE PRIVACY, FLEXIBILITY, CLARITY AND AUTHORITY ESSENTIAL TO THE EFFECTIVE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

9. THE GENERAL COMPLAINT OF OUR ALLIES AND EVEN OUR ADVERSARIES IS THAT NOBODY CAN BE SURE OF MR. CARTER'S POLICIES OR OF CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT EVEN WHEN THE PRESIDENT MAKES UP HIS MIND. FEELING THAT ALL THESE PROBLEMS ARE BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ARE INCREASINGLY WORKING THROUGH THE POLITICAL LOBBIES, THE BIG LAW FIRMS IN WASHINGTON AND THE SPECIAL-INTEREST GROUPS THAT HAVE THEIR POWERFUL SUPPORTERS ON CAPITOL HILL.

10. THERE IS A RELATED PROBLEM. ALL THIS TUGGING AND HAULING BETWEEN THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE CONGRESS AND BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND OTHER CAPITALS NOT ONLY MAKES NEWS BUT TENDS TO DOMINATE THE NEWS AND CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE OF CONFUSION, INDECISION, AND INCOHERENCE.

11. THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER EDITORS HAVE BEEN HERE ALL WEEK, AND THEIR MAIN QUESTIONS SEEMED TO BE WHAT WAS THE MATTER WITH MR. CARTER'S "LEADERSHIP" RATHER THAN WHETHER ANY PRESIDENT COULD MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS.

12. THIS THEME OF PRESIDENTIAL RECKLESSNESS IN THE AMERICAN PRESS WAS IMMEDIATELY PICKED UP BY THE NEWS-
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PAPERS AND TELEVISION REPORTERS IN THE FREE NATIONS AND BY THE PROPAGANDA APPARATUS IN MOSCOW AND THE OTHER COMMUNIST CAPITALS. AS A RESULT, DOUBTS ABOUT MR. CARTER'S INTENTIONS AND LEADERSHIP HAVE NOW BECOME THE TOPIC OF WORLDWIDE SPECULATION IN THE MIDST OF CRITICAL DECISIONS OVER ARMS CONTROL, PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, AND ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICY IN THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL NATIONS.

13. THERE IS NO LACK OF DISCUSSION OF THESE PROBLEMS IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESIDENT IS CONSCIOUS OF THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CONGRESS, OF THE DECLINE IN PARTY LOYALTY, AND OF THE REDUCED AUTHORITY OF PARTY LEADERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN IN HOUSE AND SENATE.

14. THE LEADERS OF CONGRESS ARE LIKEWISE AWARE OF THEIR OWN DIVISIONS AND SHORTCOMINGS AND OF THEIR INCREASING ABILITY TO DETERMINE FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES LIKE ENERGY, TAXES OR PANAMA ON WHICH THEY CANNOT AGREE. AND OF COURSE THE PRESS IS ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF EVERYBODY'S FAULTS, SOMETIMES EVEN INCLUDING ITS OWN. BUT THESE STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES OF POLICIES AND COMMUNICATIONS REMAIN, AND IN MANY WAYS SEEM TO BE GETTING WORSE.

15. THE PLAY OF FORCE BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT; THE RISING INFLUENCE OF SPECIAL-INTEREST LOBBIES; THE CONSTANT EMPHASIS ON THE NEGATIVE AND ON THE TRIVIAL RATHER THAN ON THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE NEWS: ALL THIS HAS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT "LEADERSHIP" AND PROGRESS OR FAILURE IN

POLITICS HERE TODAY. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING JIMMY CARTER OR ANYBODY ELSE ON THE POLITICAL STAGE CAN COR-
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RECT BY SOME INTELLECTUAL COHERENCE OR PERSONAL MAGNETISM. IT IS A BUILT-IN PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE ITSELF. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE096536
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BDSHANKS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0603
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780454/aaaabtnj.tel
Line Count: 178
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c69101b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2960192
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: OVIP, SOPN, PGOV, US, NEW YORK TIMES, (RESTON, JAMES)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c69101b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014